

- 24 -

**THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

1. A shoe upper, including one or more resiliently deformable protrusions extending from an outer surface of the shoe upper and positioned for contact with a ball, each said protrusion forming at least an inner contoured shape portion and an outer contoured shape portion, said outer contoured shape portion being deformable to promote engagement of said protrusion with said ball.  
5
2. A shoe upper according to claim 1, wherein the outer contoured shape portion is deformable radially relative to said inner contoured shape portion.  
10
3. A shoe upper according to claim 2, wherein the outer contoured shape portion is deformable radially inward relative to the inner contoured shape portion.  
15
4. A shoe upper according to claim 2, wherein the outer contoured shape portion is deformable radially outward relative to the inner contoured shape portion.  
20
5. A shoe upper according to claim 4, wherein the outer contoured shape portion is inclined outward relative to said inner contoured shape portion to promote radially outward deformation.  
25
6. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the inner contoured shape portion is deformable.  
7. A shoe upper according to claim 6, wherein the inner contoured shape portion is inwardly deformable.  
8. A shoe upper according to claim 6, wherein the inner contoured shape portion is outwardly deformable.

- 25 -

9. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the inner contoured shape portion defines a ball contacting area of the shoe upper.
10. A shoe upper according to claim 9, wherein the ball contact area corresponds to a sweet spot of the shoe upper.  
5
11. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein there is a plurality of successive outer contoured shape portions, each of said successive contoured shape portion being bounded by the next successive contoured shape portion.  
10
12. A shoe upper according to claim 11, wherein each of the outer contoured shape portions forms an annular outer ring.  
15
13. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the contoured shape portions have the same shape within one protrusion.
14. A shoe upper according to any one of claims 1-11, wherein the contoured shape portions have different shapes within one protrusion.  
20
15. A shoe upper according to any one of claims 1-11, wherein the contoured shape portions form a fingerprint-like pattern in at least one protrusion.
16. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the contoured shape portions are selected from any one of circular, triangular, rectangular, square, ovoid, spiral, diamond, semi-circular, "V"-like, flower-like, and other geometrical shapes.  
25
17. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein one or more of the contoured shape portions are formed as a continuous shape.  
30

- 26 -

18. A shoe upper according to claim 17, wherein one or more of the contoured shape portions forming continuous shapes have one or more openings to permit debris to escape from said contoured shape portions.
- 5 19. A shoe upper according to claim 18, wherein said one or more openings of one contoured shape portion are aligned with one or more openings of another contoured shape portion so as to form one or more channels to facilitate the escape of debris from the contoured shape portions.
- 10 20. A shoe upper according to claim 18, wherein said one or more openings of one contoured shape portion are offset with respect to one or more openings of another contoured shape portion.
21. A shoe upper according to any one of claims 18-20, wherein said one or more openings have shapes that are selected from any one of polygonal, rectangular, circular, semi-circular, diamond and other geometrical shapes.
- 15 22. A shoe upper according to claims 18-21, wherein said one or more openings are formed at the base of at least one contoured shape portion.
- 20 23. A shoe upper according to any one of claims 18-22, wherein said one or more openings are formed near or at the top of at least one contoured shape portion.
24. A shoe upper according to claim 22 or 23, wherein said one or more openings are in the form of an aperture.
- 25 25. A shoe upper according to claim 23, wherein said one or more openings are formed as cut out portions in the contoured shape portions.
- 30 26. A shoe upper according to claim 25, wherein said cut out portions are slots.

- 27 -

27. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein one or more of the contoured shape portions are formed as a broken outline of a shape.
28. A shoe upper according to claim 27, wherein said broken outline contoured shape portions include one or more gaps to permit debris to escape from said contoured shape portions.  
5
29. A shoe upper according to claim 28, wherein said one or more gaps of one broken outline contoured shape portion are aligned with one or more gaps of another broken outline contoured shape portion so as to form one or more channels to facilitate the escape of debris from the contoured shape portions.  
10
30. A shoe upper according to claim 28, wherein said one or more gaps of one broken outline contoured shape portion are offset with respect to one or more gaps of another broken outline contoured shape portion.  
15
31. A shoe upper according to claim 28, when appended to any one of claims 18-27, wherein said one or more gaps are aligned with one or more openings of a contoured shape portion that is formed as a continuous shape so as to form a channel to facilitate the escape of debris from the contoured shape portions.  
20
32. A shoe upper according to claim 28, when appended to any one of claims 18-27, wherein said one or more gaps are offset with respect to one or more openings of a contoured shape portion that is formed as a continuous shape.  
25
33. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the inner contoured shape portion has a shape selected from any one of cylindrical, rectangular, triangular, domed or other geometrical shape.
- 30 34. A shoe upper according to claim 33, wherein the inner contoured shape portion is a peg.

- 28 -

35. A shoe upper according to claim 33 or 34, wherein the inner contoured shape portion is solid.
- 5 36. A shoe upper according to claim 33 or 34, wherein the inner contoured shape portion includes an internal cavity.
- 10 37. A shoe upper according to any one of claims 1-32, wherein the inner and outer contoured shape portions are joined to form inner and outer arcs of a continuous spiral.
- 15 38. A shoe upper according to any one of claims 33-36, wherein the outer contoured shape portion is in the form of a continuous spiral.
- 20 39. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the inner and outer contoured shape portions have ball contacting surfaces which are roughened or patterned to further promote control of the ball.
40. A shoe upper according to claim 39, wherein the ball contacting surface has a step-like teeth pattern or wave-like pattern.
- 25 41. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the contoured shape portions have a cross-sectional profile selected from any one of a rectangular, sinusoidal, triangular, arcuate, and geometrical cross-sectional profile, including a combination of said cross-sectional profiles.
42. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the contoured shape portions are made from rubber, plastic, carbon fibre, fabric, resin, polyurethane, a synthetic material, or a combination of such materials.

43. A shoe upper according to claim 42, wherein the inner contoured shape portion is made of different material to the outer contoured shape portion(s).
44. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the contoured shape portions have varying thicknesses relative to each other.  
5
45. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the contoured shape portions have a uniform thickness.
- 10 46. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the contoured shape portions have varying heights relative to each other to promote engagement with the ball.
47. A shoe upper according to claim 46, wherein the outer contoured shape portions  
15 progressively increase in height from the inner contoured shape portion.
48. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims wherein, the contoured shape portions are inclined with respect to said outer surface of said shoe upper.
- 20 49. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the contoured shape portions of one or more protrusions in a throat region of the shoe upper are less deformable than the contoured shape portions of one or more protrusions in a lateral region or a medial region of the shoe upper.
- 25 50. A shoe upper according to claim 49, wherein said contoured shape portions in said throat region are made from a different material to the contoured shape portions of the lateral and medial regions.
51. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said one or  
30 more protrusions include means for promoting deformation of said contoured shape portions.

- 30 -

52. A shoe upper according to claim 51, wherein the deformation promoting means includes a groove adjacent to each said contoured shape portion to promote deformation of said contoured shape portion.

5

53. A shoe upper according to claim 52, wherein the groove extends parallel to the length of said contoured shape portion.

54. A shoe upper according to any one of claims 51-53, wherein the deformation 10 promoting means includes a means for supporting each said contoured shape portion during deformation.

55. A shoe upper according to claim 54, wherein said supporting means includes a 15 spring-like mechanism.

15

56. A shoe upper according to claim 54 or 55, wherein said supporting means includes a pad to brace the contoured shape portion when it is deformed.

57. A shoe upper according to claim 56, wherein said pad extends parallel to the 20 contoured shape portion.

58. A shoe upper according to claim 57, wherein said pad is located within said groove.

59. A shoe upper according to any one of claims 56-58, wherein said pad is made of a 25 deformably resilient material.

60. A shoe upper according to claim 59, wherein said deformably resilient material includes rubber, plastic, carbon fibre, fabric, resin, polyurethane or a synthetic material.

30

- 31 -

61. A shoe upper according to any one of claims 56-60, wherein said pad includes an internal cavity to contain a resilient fluid.
62. A shoe upper according to claim 61, wherein said resilient fluid includes a gel, liquid or gas, including air.
63. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein each said contoured shape portion includes a resilient strip for promoting contact with the ball.
64. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein two or more outer contoured shape portions share a common wall along part of their respective lengths.
65. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said shoe upper includes a plurality of deformably resilient members extending transversely across a throat region of the shoe upper.
66. A shoe upper according to claim 65, wherein each said member includes means for promoting deformation of said member, said deformation promoting means being in accordance with any one of claims 51-62.
67. A shoe upper according to any claim 65 or 66, wherein each said member includes a resilient strip for promoting contact with the ball.
68. A shoe upper according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein one or more of said contoured shape portions are removably attachable to the shoe upper.
69. A shoe upper according to claim 68, wherein one or more of said contoured shape portions are removably attachable to a mounting surface, said mounting surface being removably attachable to said shoe upper.

70. A shoe upper according to claim 68, wherein one or more said contoured shape portions are fixed to a mounting surface, said mounting surface being removably attachable to said shoe upper.

5

71. A shoe upper according to any one of claims 1-67, wherein said one or more protrusions are removably attachable to the shoe upper.

72. A shoe upper according to claim 71, wherein one or more of said protrusions are removably attachable to a mounting surface, said mounting surface being removably attachable to said shoe upper.

10

73. A shoe upper according to claim 71, wherein one or more of said protrusions are fixed on a mounting surface, said mounting surface being removably attachable to said shoe upper.

15

74. A shoe upper according to any one of claims 1-67, wherein one or more of said contoured shape portions and said shoe upper are integrally formed with a sole of the shoe.

20

75. A shoe upper according to any one of claims 1-67, wherein said one or more protrusions and said shoe upper are integrally formed with a sole of the shoe.

25

76. A kit for a shoe upper, said kit including one or more resiliently deformable protrusions, each having a mounting surface for removably attaching said protrusions to said shoe upper so that said one or more protrusions extend from an outer surface of the shoe upper and are positioned for contact with a ball, each said protrusion forming at least an inner contoured shape portion and an outer contoured shape portion, said outer contoured shape portion being deformable to promote engagement of said protrusion with said ball.

30

- 33 -

77. A kit according to claim 76, wherein the outer contoured shape portion is deformable radially relative to said inner contoured shape portion.
78. A kit according to claim 77, wherein the outer contoured shape portion is deformable radially outward relative to the inner contoured shape portion.
79. A kit according to claim 78, wherein the outer contoured shape portion is inclined outward relative to said inner contoured shape portion to promote radially outward deformation.
80. A kit according to any one of claims 76-79, wherein there is a plurality of successive outer contoured shape portions, each of said successive contoured shape portion being bounded by the next successive contoured shape portion.
81. A kit according to any one of claims 76-80, wherein one or more of the contoured shape portions are formed as a continuous shape.
82. A kit according to claim 81, wherein one or more of the contoured shape portions forming continuous shapes have one or more openings to permit debris to escape from said contoured shape portions.
83. A kit according to any one of claims 76-82, wherein one or more of the contoured shape portions are formed as a broken outline of a shape.
84. A kit according to claim 83, wherein said broken outline contoured shape portions include one or more gaps to permit debris to escape from said contoured shape portions.
85. A kit according to any one of claims 76-84, wherein the inner contoured shape portion is a peg.

- 34 -

86. A kit according to claim 85, wherein the peg is a solid.
87. A kit according to any one of claims 76-86, wherein one or more of said contoured shape portions are removably attachable to said mounting surface.  
5
88. A shoe upper substantially as described with reference to the drawings and/or Examples.